"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

WAR SUFFERERS' RELIEF BULLETIN

January, 1947 **Vol. II, No. 11**

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Chu-hsien-chen Medical Center

By Wilbert Lind

When entering a new territory one inevitably formulates many ideas as to what he expects to find. In the States we detect slight differences in customs and habits when traveling from coast to coast, but fundamentally the people live much the same. As I anticipated entering China, I naturally expected to find marked differences in custom, but since this large body of people had been suffering from war for almost a decade I conceived not only custom differences but a general turmoil prevalent throughout the land. Refugees finding their way back hundreds of miles by every known means of transportation to the villages from which they had fled several years before, had not only to repair their old homes and in many cases improvise a temporary shelter where houses had been destroyed, but till the soil so as to reap another harvest. The immediate future of China looked rather dismal and I shuddered at the thought of seeing emaciated and dying people lying in the streets for want of food. My apprehensions immediately subsided, however, when I reached China. The results of malnutrition are evident, but I have yet to see a starving person. In the rice growing provinces the food shortage is said to be acute, but farther north in the wheat raising zones food is more plentiful.

The food problem then being solved in this province, I began to question the validity of relief work here. I dare say if one were to travel by train into the interior of China and visit only larger towns he might possibly feel that relief work is a waste of time and money in these northern provinces. To many of us the term relief work may mean the passing out of food and clothing where people are in dire need. As winter approaches we find many are in need of clothing and will suffer unless given aid. Our unit has a clothing distribution project with a good supply of U.N.R.R.A. and M.C.C. clothing to be passed out. This will meet a real need.

As one walks along a dusty road of some remote village where people almost live in the street, he is also cognizant of an appalling medical need. This need is not only in a few scattered villages, but is apparent throughout the whole of China. Statistics show there is one doctor to every 70,000 people in China, whereas in America we have one doctor for every 800 people. Many "quack" doctors who know little or nothing of medicine take advantage of this situation by charging exorbitant prices and often the patient is worse for having had treatment. I observed one of these "doctors" treat several patients along the roadside one afternoon. One man complained of a headache so the "quack" removed three contaminated needles from his hat and inserted one in each side of his head and the third in the back of his neck. He left the needles inserted a few minutes to give the "bad air" sufficient time to come out. Another complained of a stomach-ache, so a long needle was pushed into his abdomen with the same idea of letting the "bad air" escape. A man with eye trouble had the same remedy applied

to each socket just outside the eyeball. A thirty-year-old woman came to our clinic with the report that water had flowed from her eyes when the "doctor" had placed needles in them as a cure. Since then she has been blind. There is no chance for her to regain her sight for the fluid has been drained from her eyeballs. It is in an environment such as this that the M.C.C. has a medical clinic in operation.

The village of Chu-hsien-chen has a population of at least 8,000 people, no medical facilities, and is 15 miles away from the nearest hospital; therefore, it presents an ideal site for our medical clinic. I have been privileged to work in it for the past six weeks and find it very interesting. Charter members of the staff now here are Dr. Hu, a member of the General Conference mission, and Miss Verna Zimmerman, R.N. We have an average of 100 patients a day, but even though our clinic be small one is aware that his services are a definite contribution to a few of the many who make up China's millions. Our work is too interesting to become monotonous. Let me tell of just one afternoon's experience. Verna and I were alone when an emergency gunshot case arrived. The patient was shot and robbed by bandits and had a broken jaw and mouth wounds. His tongue was cut in two and the side of his face was badly lacerated. Verna had never before put in stitches, but before the afternoon came to a close she had inserted four in the tongue and ten in the side of his face. After carrying the man to an inn across the way, we had an audible prayer meeting led by a Chinese Christian, at his bedside. He thanked the Lord for His guiding hand during the tense moments of the afternoon and asked for healing for this man's body. As I knelt by my bedside that night I rejoiced with thanksgiving to God that we were privileged to minister to one this day who was injured and robbed by the wayside.

Besides our clinic, we are inaugurating a health project in the two public schools in town. Last week we examined 435 students in a refugee school and found 94 per cent of the children have trachoma. Next week we plan to examine the students in the second school and perhaps the percentage will be just as high. The refugee school is staffed with a doctor and two nurses, but their services are almost nil, for the school is unable to purchase medicine. This school has been well provided with foreign clothing and it was nothing unusual to see a boy wearing a woman's dress. The Chinese style of clothing is different from ours and, no doubt, the lad thought he had secured an overcoat.

Today marked another mile post in the history of this project. Quite a few young people in this town are very eager to study English so we have been teaching it twice a week. They had previously had language study in school so are learning rapidly and today we initiated an English Bible class. Only seven Chinese were present today, but I'm sure the number will soon be larger.

A church was begun in this village by the Baptists years ago. Even though we are unable to fully understand their language we do enjoy attending their services on Sunday. Though separated by a language barrier and racial customs, we find we have much in common with these people for we serve the same God. We usually find the church filled to capacity with some 150 people. Many sit on the floor because of the lack of benches. Services are not conducted as they are in America, but they are zealous and we are happy to co-operate with them in our relief efforts. Every Sunday afternoon a group of lay people meet in our dining room for a Chinese worship service. They are eager for more Bible study.

We hope in the near future to find a Chinese Christian who will be willing to give part of his or her time to the clinic as a teacher. Clinic opens daily at nine o'clock, but since the Chinese have few timepieces many come at eight o'clock or sooner and wait. It is idle time to them, but it presents an evangelistic opportunity as well as an opportunity for teaching health and sanitation.

As we look to the future of this M.C.C. Medical Center in Chu-hsien-chen, we have confidence that it will be more than just another clinic where pills are passed from bottle to patient. The Lord is blessing this work and we trust it may be a community lighthouse where people are aided both physically and spiritually.

WAR SUFFERERS' RELIEF BULLETIN is published monthly by the Mennonite Central Committee. It is distributed without cost to anyone desiring information regarding Mennonite relief activities. Address all communications to the editor, John A. Hostetler, Akron, Pa. Printed in U.S.A.

Thinking about Relief

Why Relief

In any activity there is always the question of motive or purpose. Why do we, as Christian people, send food, clothing and means of rehabilitation to those who through war or famine have been brought into desperate straits? Are we thinking of this relief work as an end in itself? Do we feed hungry people because they are hungry, and clothe the naked because they are naked? Do we nurse the sick because they are sick, and build houses because the people are homeless? Or do we do these things merely because they make an opportunity for us to preach the Gospel and to win converts to Christ and the church? If we knew that there was no chance of winning a starving man for Christ, would we then let him starve? Every truly Christian man has a passion to make Christ known. But we must recognize that the good we can do men is not a means to an end but rather a form through which we are enabled to demonstrate the love of God. There must be an inner integrity of means and motive. Double-dealing and underhand methods of buying adherents to the Christian faith are despicable to every honest man. Relief should be not so much a means to evangelism as a form of evangelism.

A Chinese boy, but meagerly instructed in things Christian, pointed to a missionary going down the street and said, "There goes Jesus." That impression to a heathen boy was certainly a step toward his acceptance of the message that the Christ-like missionary taught. If the relief worker is evangelistic in his character and in his whole thought approach to his work, then sooner or later and in one way or another the evangelistic impact will be made.

There are times when deeds speak much louder than words. Shakespeare said, "The silence often of pure innocence persuades when speaking fails." Men have a way of believing those who have proved themselves in a very much everyday way.

—Paul Erb.

Change of Editors

Beginning with the next issue of the **War Sufferers' Relief Bulletin** Ernest W. Lehman will serve as Publicity Editor and will be in charge of publicity releases from the Akron headquarters office. Bro. Lehman has for the past year served in the Peace Section research office and is well acquainted with the relief, peace, and other activities of the Mennonite Central Committee. He is personally acquainted with a large number of our relief workers on the field and is well fitted to keep our constituency informed on relief activities in this as well as other releases.—J. A. H.

SPEAK

Those dragging feeble steps, those shoeless feet,
Those hollow pleading eyes, that falling tear,
Those cold blue hands, that listlessness, defeat;
Speak—will they never disappear?

Not till our wealth, our life, our all
We yield to HIM, who brought goodwill to earth,
Not till the Prince of Peace's gentle call
Is truly real to us—commemorators of His birth.

Corny Dyck.

Hookworm Control Project

By Dennis Lehman, Harold Vercler and Edwin Schmidt

Itacurubi del Rosario is a proud little city, but a stranger coming to town can hardly be impressed with a passing view. There is nothing spectacular. All painted buildings, red, blue, or white are dull and rain-washed. We asked what the population of the town is and with pride we were told that there are many, many people. That answer was hardly specific enough and a more specific answer of five to eight thousand also seemed out of reason. It was then, while making a survey and visiting each house, that a person could not help but become impressed with this old little town of nine hundred eighty-five inhabitants according to our census. We are impressed with the simplicity of living needs. Four walls with a door and an opening for a window plus a roof provides sufficient shelter, mandioca and meat provides most of the food, and one set of good clothes and another semi-covering with rags gives them the clothing needs. Good shoes are quite optional.

We were impressed with the friendliness of the people. They thank us for the little visit of a few minutes while the name and ages of each member of the family is recorded for the purpose of making and keeping systematic records for the analysis and the treatment for parasites. The most common of these is the hookworm which is also very prevalent in the southern states of the United States. Interesting observations are made around the house. Almost all the common things which we consider necessities are lacking with the exception of the dogs and the chickens. Rawhide straps woven on a cot frame substitutes for our bed springs plus innersprings. All furniture, which is the table and one or two chairs, is crude and without paint or varnish. A stove is quite unnecessary for most households. Cooking is done by an open fire and hot water is not needed for laundering. A wooden trough serves as the washing machine and wash tubs. Their equivalent of the Biblical grindstone is made of hard wood which is a short log of convenient length. This is set on end and the top is carved out to form a bowl. Into this is placed the corn, and it is hammered into flour with a heavy wooden club. Children the world over get dirty, but these have a tendency to stay dirtier. Many of them are seen with scabbed toes from ground itch, greatly distended stomachs, sleepy eyes and pale complexions. Some mothers complain that their children like to eat dirt. These are the most common symptoms of hookworm disease.

Very few homes seem to represent a closely knit family relationship as we know the Christian home. Two, three and even more surnames appear on a family card which we make from the survey of each home. An exceptional incident occurred when the father and mother momentarily disagreed on which of two last names should be recorded for one of the children.

We feel that more and more people are gaining confidence in the project. This was evidenced by the high percentage of specimens collected for analysis which we make at our laboratory. This laboratory is a small thatch-covered building which we also use as a depot for the building project. Here an average of 40 samples a day are prepared and analyzed by Harold Vercler. It is not long after the laboratory is opened in the morning until a few children come to see this strange instrument called a microscope. At first they stand shyly by the door and watch, but after a few words of encouragement and an hour's time they muster up sufficient courage to come and look into it. For these children a look into the microscope is a view into a new world. With amazement they recognize the microscopic hookworm eggs in various stages of development. Their expressions of, "ah," "oh," "lindo" are not uncommon.

A few townspeople were somewhat reluctant at first in accepting the project, but as the program progressed they too became interested and therefore came to the laboratory and asked for the small specimen cans in order to learn whether or not they have intestinal parasites. Of the 786 tests run in Itacurubi, 70 per cent were positive.

One day each week medication is given by one of our workers and the Guarda Sanitario at his office. Treatment is given free and we hope it will be possible to make it 100 per cent so that later with

sanitary toilet facilities reinfestation will not be as likely to occur. However, the survey statistics on the percentage of sanitary toilets in existence indicate that only one family out of five has an approved toilet and 31 per cent have no toilet at all. That brings us to the privy building project, a very important phase in the hookworm control program. Very little building lumber is available and all lumber costs are high. For that reason it was found most practical to build with brick. The round pit is brick curbed, six and one-half feet deep and three feet in diameter, and the floor is a prefabricated round concrete slab. It is necessary to make the slab four inches thick because no steel reinforcement is availible.

For those people who wish to have only the pit and floor slabs, the cost is five hundred and fifty bricks at slightly less than one cent each and one bag of cement. They can do their own work with our supervision or pay for experienced help. For people who want and can afford the entire unit we make a round brick building.

Dr. Gaede's Wagon Trip Impressions to the Chaco

"We were now approaching a heavily wooded and well elevated hoch-camp, the horses just trudged into it without any apprehension. But suddenly we were in utter darkness as if in a tunnel, the heavy foliage of trees closing in over us so that not a single star could be seen. Nobody could see the next fellow, either in front, in the back, or on the side. Everybody was busy dodging branches and trees and sliding from one end of the seat to the other, holding on wherever a person could find some support, sometimes grabbing the wagon to maintain a balance either a little to the left or to the right of dead center as the position of the wagon may be. The hearing and feeling of those wheels sinking way down into a water hole and then coming out again only to feel the next one going down again was a constant intensifier of one's suspense, never knowing whether the next chuckhole wouldn't be bigger than any one we had passed through before. The body was getting weary when suddenly ahead of the horses was an open space and in a few seconds we were out in the clear under the bright stars and the open camp just ahead."

Buried Treasure

What child does not dream of finding buried treasure? In Ch'i-hsien the Free Methodist Mission had a small, well organized, well equiped hospital and living quarters for all the hospital staff on one compound and on another compound they carried on their educational program and more formal church work. In the early part of June, 1938, the Japanese controlled Ch'i-hsien, but because the mission was an American organization they had to content themselves with "borrowing" equipment which, of course, was never returned. After Pearl Harbor the two American missionaries were interned, one in each compound. Later they were both allowed to occupy one small room behind the church building. During this sixteen months period of internment they were able to supervise the burying of a small per cent of their personal belongings and hospital equipment. To them it seemed like pitifully small salvage, but to us who had worked in another hospital where nothing had been saved it seemed like riches indeed.

There were large Chinese **kangs** (crocks) containing personal chinaware and glassware, kitchen utensils, and hospital glassware. The instruments had been well oiled and were in fairly good condition.

Several days later we went to another small courtyard and helped unearth about 200 pieces of hospital enamelware which had been dug up and washed earlier in the summer, but when the Communists took the city for a short time the Chinese pastor quickly buried it again. These articles could not be replaced because the prices are absolutely out of reason and much of it is not available at any price.

Throughout these days we were filled with respect for the courage and ingenuity of the missionaries and for the loyalty of the Chinese Christians who left these things buried during these years of stress and poverty when they could have been sold for such a great price.

The M.C.C. has committed itself to rehabilitate this hospital so that when the missionary doctor is able to come the work will be well started. As we work we pray that God's will be done and His kingdom furthered.—Vera Yoder.

Men will consider our testimony only if we prove its genuineness by our life.

A Letter to America

From a Handful of Men in Germany

Look in, dear Americans, look in our dwelling—an air-raid-shelter in the cellar of the Protestant community-house. There are many small rooms. The walls and ceilings are made of concrete. Herein thousands have fled during the war, when sirens were howling, women with crying children on their arms, old men and old women. Now we are living here—five persons in one of the rooms. The others serve as overnight places for travellers. There is no daylight, no window, through which fresh air could come in. But we are "at home" in here, we five—Fred, Paul, Jan, Rolf, and Robert. We met each other here, for we came from Italy, from France, from Norway . . . discharged soldiers. Originally we wanted to "go home." Our native land in East-Germany became strange country. Our families are not to be found. They also do not know where we are, with one exception. Imagine, finally, after one and one-half years Fred received a letter from his wife and his three children! He received one good suit from you, dear Americans. Yes, he can show himself to the world. But his wife has it worse. She only owns one dress, that she wore when she left Silesia. And now comes the winter! For the children she took along whatever she could carry. But for herself? When is a mother ever thinking of herself? Now she will have to be cold and Fred will be ashamed that he has such a nice suit. But he will make every effort to get a coat from the American contribution.

We are working for the Protestant church. Sure, we are well. We have a roof above our heads. On the walls there hang the pictures of our beloved ones. A few books are on the shelf. In the evenings we have nice talks. We also read together in the Bible and talk about why the war was lost. We have been a nation without Christ. **With** Christ we would not have started the war at all. The danger is not yet over, that our nation remains without Christ. It is only good, that you, dear Americans, have most of our relief supplies distributed through the church. So the people here see that these are Christian gifts. The German folks need such proof of the love of Christ.

Fourteen churches are destroyed here. Out of the ruins we get bricks and clean them. Oh, this old cement is hard. One must hammer it up. But not too strong, otherwise the cement breaks. And then we build. New rooms must be established for masses and for the confirmation lessons and meeting rooms for the men, the women, the youth. God's Word has to be told anew. And the lack of space is great. There must be room for Christ the Master. He has been born in a stable, but shall this remain that way? We will create him more worthy rooms! But, don't imagine this too easy. The toes are looking out of our boots. And then, always in ruins! This hurts the toes. And the soles, the soles! The other day the shoemaker said to Paul that now it would be at an end. With the best of his will, he could not repair any more of these ruins. Now, Paul is wearing wooden boots. But how shall this become in winter. Can you help us, dear fellow Christians in America?

It is always miserable if we have to interrupt our work when it is raining. You see, we only have our old torn uniforms. Sure, if we could change the clothing after being wet! But then we have to lay in bed immediately, if our clothing is drenched. Now, Robert is supposed to get an American suit. The best thing would be to take it as a common suit—who goes out may wear it. But Robert is small compared with Rolf who who is a giant. Pat and little Pat and one suit! Robert can pull the trousers over his head. But in case of Rolf the trousers end at the knees. And then, no stockings. Impossible that he can go to church this way!

Dear brothers and sisters, thanks of your assistance, with the food it is best. Imagine, even in summer Rolf has kept his weight. He is 1.92 m big and weighs 77 kg. And this in spite of the hard work! But we get additional food from your contributors from the Protestant Relief Work!

But now, winter is growing. If you could help further? It is un-Christian to worry that much. But it is not possible to restrain the question: How shall the life go on?

(The above letter was received from Robert Kreider through Evangelisches Hilfswerk in Kassel.)

Notes From the Field

Thanks from Germany

A soldier, Capt. Lester C. Dill, personally called at the Akron office recently to relay the gratitude of children in Germany who received Mennonite gifts. For seven months he worked with several hundred children in orphanages. In a recent letter he writes:

Mennonite Central Committee
Akron, Pennsylvania
My dear Friends,

At this Christmas season, the children of Germany and myself, send you sincere greetings. As a small voice for these blessed children, this old captain thanks you sincerely for the wonderful assistance you have rendered and are rendering to them. You are truly servants of God and you materially demonstrate my intention that when our blessed Lord said "Suffer little children to come unto me," He did not specify nationalities. The children and myself say in the words of Tiny Tim, "God bless you each and everyone."

Most sincerely,
Captain Dill.

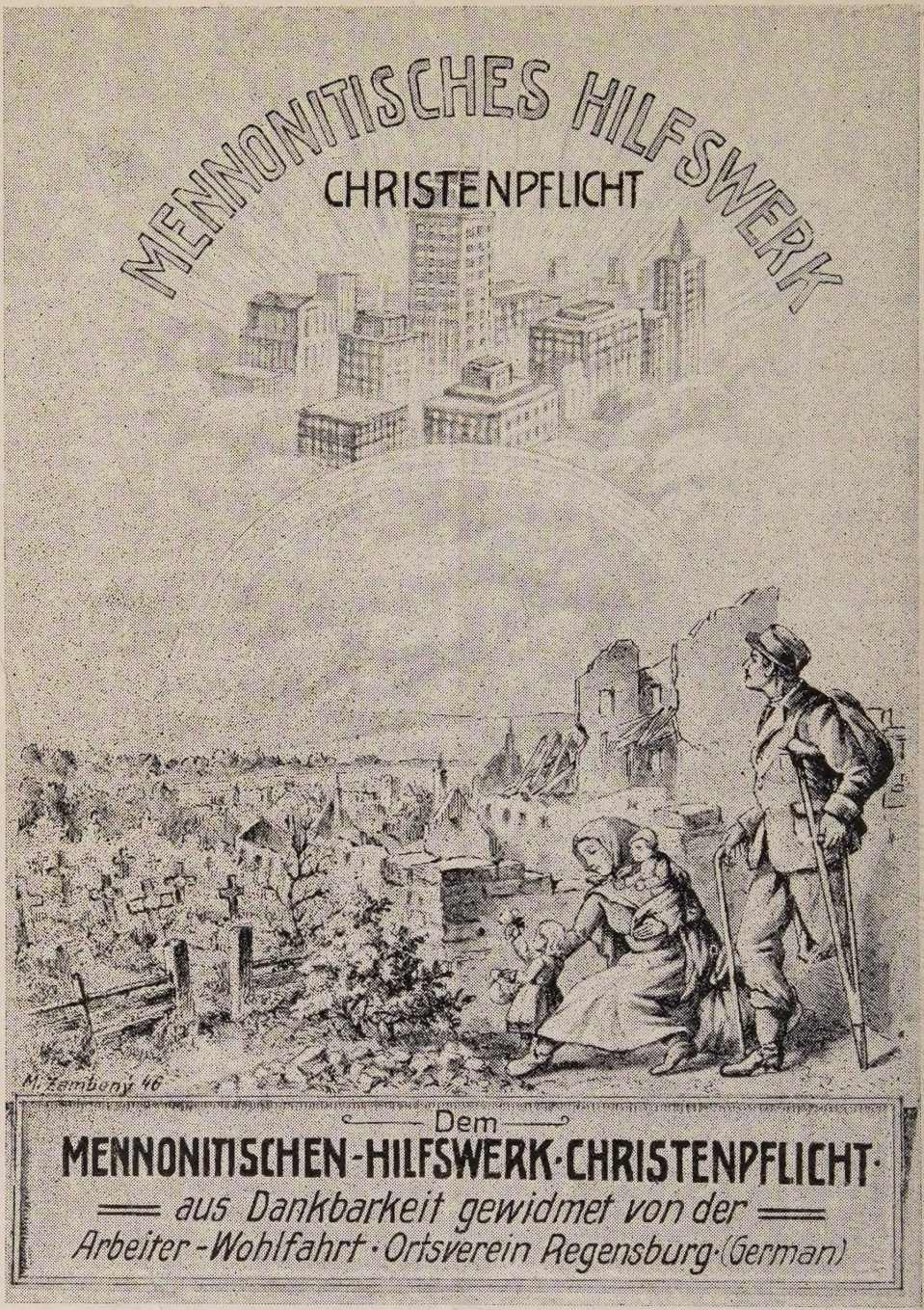
In a separate circular with the names of children and their needs Captain Dill makes a plea for the children of Germany. He says, "They are all orphans through the ravages of war and are of all creeds. Some few have parents, the whereabouts of whom are unknown . . . these children are the innocent victims and not the causes of the war. They are the pitiful victims of a cruel set of circumstances over which they, by their very age, could have no control."

France

Madeline Garber reports clothing distributions since she took charge of this program (October and November, 1946). When she took over there were 569 bales and cases of clothing in the depot, as well as 59 cases of shoes. In October and November 130 bales of clothing were opened and distributed and 61 cases of shoes. Five hundred and ninety-five families were served, which means a total of 2,125 persons. On hand are 439 bales and cases of clothing and 53 cases of shoes. We are low on boys' and girls' coats and men's suits. Madeline also gave a description of the clothing distributions which she had organized in Mennonite communities of Lorraine and Alsace. John Fretz makes the arrangements ahead of time. He sets the date with the minister, inquires about the number of persons to be served and the exact location of the distribution. When Madeline, Elizabeth Brauer and Gertrude Gassmann arrive for the distributions, they set up a regular clothing depot in the church or the rooms put at their disposal. Gertrude meets the people at the entrance, writes their requests on clothing distribution forms, Madeline and Elizabeth serve the people and John distributes the tools and utensils outside. The recipients are very grateful for these gifts and Madeline has a definite feeling that these distributions strengthen the bonds of fellowship between the Mennonites in France and in the United States and Canada. Madeline has had opportunity to explain that this program of relief is not possible because all the Mennonites in America are desperately rich (as many people seem to think here) but because we are taught to GIVE from childhood on.

Builders' Unit, France

This is to inform you of the latest news and developments of the R.T.U.F. We are slowly getting settled and the boys are making themselves feel at home. We moved into our barracks this week and we are happy for that. I feel that we have a very nice setup here as far as living quarters are concerned. Our barracks are completed, but we haven't hooked up our electricity and water as yet. We still have a few days work left around the barracks and then next week we plan to start our work on the project. We have our first few jobs lined up and we are getting ready to tackle those. These first few will be in the city of Wissembourg. It will consist mostly of roof repairing and closing of shell holes in the walls. The local community is very good to us and they are anxious to see what we can do. The city is paying for our fuel for cooking and heating. They are co-operating with us in every way and we feel fortunate in this. I feel that we have a very fine group of boys here and that they will render a service worthwhile. Arthur Smucker will go as the unit leader while Harold Liechty will be the project foreman. These are both good boys and I am confident that they will do their best.—Orlo Goering.



In the city of Rengensburg the German Mennonite relief organization, Christenflicht, has been distributing M.C.C. relief supplies each week to 300 selected needy persons. These are selected as the "poorest of the poor." Among these are needy persons presented by the Catholics, others by the Protestants, others by the Worker's Welfare Agency. This picture was presented by the Arbeiterwohlfahrt in the city of Regensburg, Bavaria, as an expression of appreciation for the work of Christenflicht in that city.